

IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims are listed below for the convenience of the Examiner. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

1. (original) A conference management assistance apparatus which assists progress of proceedings, comprising:

an information accepting section which accepts necessary information needed for scheduling of a given conference, the necessary information containing a scheduled time of the entire conference as well as minimum guaranteed time which needs to be secured at the minimum and desired, normally requested time for each subject to be addressed; and

a schedule planning section which plans a schedule for the conference based on the necessary information accepted by the information accepting section.

2. (original) The conference management assistance apparatus according to claim 1, wherein:

the information accepting section further accepts input of priority of time allocation for each subject to be addressed; and

the schedule planning section allocates the normally requested times to the subjects in descending order of priority among the subjects to be addressed at the conference according to the priority accepted by the information accepting section within the scheduled time of the entire conference and allocates the minimum guaranteed times to the remaining subjects to be addressed at the conference other than the subjects to which normally requested times are allocated.

3. (original) The conference management assistance apparatus according to claim 1, wherein:

the information accepting section further accepts input of the order in which the subjects will be addressed at the conference; and

the schedule planning section plans a schedule according to the order at the conference, accepted by the information accepting section.

4. (original) The conference management assistance apparatus according to claim 1, comprising a schedule display section which displays the schedule planned by the schedule planning section.

5. (original) The conference management assistance apparatus according to claim 1, comprising a schedule management section which measures the time from the start of discussion of the subjects addressed at the conference and gives a notice when a scheduled discussion end time of a subject under discussion comes according to the schedule planned by the schedule planning section.

6. (original) The conference management assistance apparatus according to claim 5, wherein:

when the scheduled discussion end time of the subject under discussion comes, the information accepting section selects whether to terminate discussing the subject under discussion and if the discussion is to be continued, the information accepting section accepts modification of the necessary information which has already been accepted by the information accepting section; and

the schedule planning section replans a subsequent schedule for the conference in progress based on the modification of the necessary information.

7. (original) The conference management assistance apparatus according to claim 6, wherein:

the information accepting section accepts a plurality of modifications of the necessary information which has already been accepted by the information accepting section;

the schedule planning section replans a plurality of schedules corresponding to the plurality of modifications of the necessary information; and

the information accepting section further allows selection from the plurality of replanned schedules.

8. (original) A conference management assistance program that runs on a computer and makes the computer operate as a conference management assistance apparatus for assisting progress of proceedings and comprising:

an information accepting section which accepts input of necessary information needed for scheduling of a given conference, the necessary information containing a scheduled time of the entire conference as well as minimum guaranteed time which needs to be secured at the minimum and desired, normally requested time for each subject; and

a schedule planning section which plans a schedule for the conference based on the necessary information accepted by the information accepting section.

9. (original) The conference management assistance program according to claim 8, wherein:

the information accepting section accepts input of priority of time allocation for each subject to be addressed; and

the schedule planning section allocates the normally requested times to the subjects in descending order of priority among the subjects to be addressed at the conference according to the priority accepted by the information accepting section within the scheduled time of the entire conference and allocates the minimum guaranteed times to the remaining subjects to be addressed at the conference other than the subjects to which normally requested times are allocated.

10. (original) The conference management assistance program according to claim 8, wherein:

the information accepting section further accepts input of the order in which the subjects will be addressed at the conference; and

the schedule planning section plans a schedule according to the order at the conference, accepted by the information accepting section.

11. (original) The conference management assistance program according to claim 8, wherein the computer operate as a conference management assistance apparatus comprising a display section which displays the schedule planned by the schedule planning section.

12. (original) The conference management assistance program according to claim 8, wherein the computer operate as a conference management assistance apparatus comprising a schedule management section which measures the time from the start of discussion of the subjects addressed at the conference and gives a notice when a scheduled discussion end time of a subject under discussion comes according to the schedule planned by the schedule planning section.

13. (original) The conference management assistance program according to claim 12, wherein:

when the scheduled discussion end time of the subject under discussion comes, the information accepting section selects whether to terminate discussing the subject under discussion and if the discussion is to be continued, the information accepting section accepts modification of the necessary information which has already been accepted by the information accepting section; and

the schedule planning section replans a subsequent schedule for the conference in progress based on the modification of the necessary information.

14. (original) The conference management assistance program according to claim 13, wherein:

the information accepting section accepts a plurality of modifications of the necessary information which has already been accepted by the information accepting section;

the schedule planning section replans a plurality of schedules corresponding to the plurality of modifications of the necessary information; and

the information accepting section further allows selection from the plurality of replanned schedules.